

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough search and examination of the present patent application.

On February 9, 2005, Applicants attorneys resubmitted a Power of Attorney, revoking all previous powers and appointing the undersigned firm as the applicants' representative.

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, on the grounds that the claim fails to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention. More particularly, several claim elements are identified as lacking antecedent basis, and an improper use of a preposition is identified (in claim 6). Accordingly, claims 1-6 have been amended to correct obvious typographical errors and to define applicants' invention. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 5 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Skopp et al. (U.S. Patent Application 6,256,739). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Applicants' claim 1 is directed to a method for controlling access to a site on a data communication network, for example the Internet, in accordance with the age of the user requesting access. In accordance with applicants' claim 1, a information relating to a user's age is transmitted to at least one of the site, a service provider and the user. Thus, minors may be blocked from accessing a site that hosts unsuitable content.

For example, a service provider may provide dial-up (or other type of) Internet access for a family, including one adult user and one minor user. Further, and as defined in claim 1, as amended, the network address of the site specified by the user is "associated" with the age identifier, and the user is allowed to connect to said site as a function of the age identifier. Thus, in accordance with the invention defined in claim 1, any Internet web site can be made aware that a minor is attempting to connect thereto, and thus the web site owner can take appropriate steps, for example, to restrict access to the site.

Applicants respectfully observe that users are allowed to connect to a site as a function of the age identifier and without a requirement for an anti-pornography or other kind of filter. Indeed, no access control list of sites and/or addresses is required of applicants' claim 1. Instead, sites are associated with age identifier. Further, applicants' claim 1 protects the privacy of the

user because no other information, apart from the information that the user is minor, is sent in the Internet.

Applicants respectfully submit that Skopp does not teach or suggest the features defined in applicants' claim 1. Skopp describes a system which allows certain advertisement banners to be visible on a client's browser. For example, Skopp, at col. 5, lines 1-7, specifies that "the user PC 200 would request and receive Web page information through a Web proxy 510 and proxy control processor 530, and the Web page associated with the selected advertisement would be displayed. Although the user would be allowed to view a predetermined list of related Web pages, other Web page requests would be rejected by the system 510, 530." Further, Skopp describes use of an Access Control List (ACL) of particular sites or web pages and that is maintained by access control proxy 310. A proxy control protocol daemon 330 informs the access control proxy of any change to the ACL. The ACL is referenced to determine whether a Web page request from the browser application 220 with a particular IP address should be granted. Thus, in contrast with applicants' claim 1, Skopp relies on typical prior art content filtering via a proxy and access control list, which are not required or elements defined in applicants' claim 1. Instead, applicants' claim 1 includes a step of transmitting age information to at least one of a site, a service provider and a user. This claimed feature is not taught or suggested by Skopp.

Therefore, for the foregoing reasons, applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, as amended, is allowable over Skopp.

Claims 2, 5 and 6 depend directly from claim 1 and are, therefore, patentable for the same reasons, as well as because of the combination of features in those claims with the features set forth in claim 1.

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Skopp et al. and further in view of common practice in the art. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants respectfully submit that elements of amended claim 1 that are missing from the teachings of Skopp are not provided via the common practice in the art. More particularly, applicants submit that the prior art does not teach or suggest transmitting to at least one of the site, the service provider and the user age information related to the age identifier, and allowing the user to connect to the site as a function of the age identifier. Therefore, applicants submit

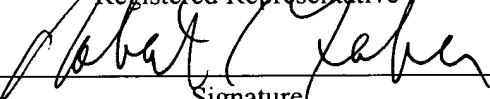
that even, for the sake of argument, if one were to combine the teachings Skopp with the common knowledge of the art, applicants' claim 4 still would not be taught because the resulting combination relies upon proxies and access control lists for content filtering. As noted above, applicants' claim 4 does not require these features.

In view of the amendments to the claims and the foregoing remarks, it is submitted that the claims remaining in the application are allowable and their allowance is requested.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450, on March 21, 2005:

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Name of applicant, assignee or
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Signature

March 21, 2005

Date of Signature

RCF:JJF:ck

Respectfully submitted,


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